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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the Lord of life, we love You but not enough. We look to You but depend too often on our own strength. We listen for You but make a lot of noise ourselves at the same time. We try to understand, as long as it doesn't change us more than we desire.

Today, draw our Senators closer to You. Empower our lawmakers to become what You desire them to be. Give them Your continual guidance so that they will console the downhearted and provide deliverance to those held captive by evil. Help our lawmakers to hear Your invitation to move to a higher level of ethical fitness.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, November 18, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator

from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business. Senator ROCKEFELLER will then be recognized for as much time as he may consume. Following his remarks, there will be an additional 2 hours of morning business. The majority will control the first hour and the Republicans will control the next hour.

Following morning business, the Senate will resume postcloture debate on the nomination of David Hamilton to be U.S. circuit judge for the Seventh Circuit.

The postcloture debate time expires about 11 p.m. tonight. It is my hope that time will not be necessary because it is basically wasted Senate time.

Yesterday, we were able to reach an agreement to consider S. 1963, the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2009 upon disposition of the Hamilton nomination. Senators should expect votes in relation to the Coburn amendment and passage of the bill.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR ROBERT BYRD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, when baseball legend Lou Gehrig retired after playing 2,130 consecutive games, every expert drew the same conclusion: this

record will never be broken. Of course, they were wrong.

Throughout history, forecasters have sentenced themselves to ridicule for prematurely assuming a skyscraper's height would never be topped, for promising an invention's ingenuity would never be outdone, or for contending an athletic feat would never be surpassed.

Even so, I am willing to risk predicting that many of Senator ROBERT BYRD's records will never be matched. Since coming to the Senate in 1959, Senator BYRD has cast more than 18,500 votes. No one else, past or present, even comes close. He is the only Senator who has ever been elected to nine full terms in this body. He has presided over both the shortest session in Senate history—not even one second long—and presided for the longest continuous period—more than 21 hours. No one has ever served on a Senate Committee longer than Senator BYRD. Just days after being sworn in, he joined the Appropriation Committee he would later chair. He has held the most leadership positions in Senate history, and continues to serve as our President Pro Tempore.

And just moments ago, when this body was gavelled into session, Senator BYRD realized one more unparalleled accomplishment: he has just become the longest-serving Member of Congress in U.S. history.

Every day since January 3, 1953—that is 56 years, 10 months and 16 days—West Virginians have been proud to be presented in Washington, by ROBERT BYRD.

He began his service in the House the same day Alaska became our 49th State, and was months into his Senate service when Hawaii became our 50th.

Senator BYRD has served in this Nation's Congress for more than a quarter of the time it has existed. And he has served in Congress longer than more than a quarter of today's sitting Senators—and the President of the United

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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